

Chaired by the Prime Minister wherein it was decided that the functioning of INSDOC be reviewed.

(d) Does not arise.

Discovery of Planets beyond Pluto by Indian Scientists

3161. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, as reported in the Deccan Chronicle dated 21st January, 2001, two Indian Scientists have claimed to have discovered two more planets in the Solar System beyond the orbit of Pluto, the ninth Planet;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the claim has been accepted by the International Science Congress if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) what steps are proposed to be taken to provide assistance and encouragement to the concerned scientists?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (d) The Deccan Chronicle has reported a claim by two scientists that there exist two more planets beyond Pluto. The reported claim is not an observational discovery. It is an untested prediction, based on a formula proposed by the authors, not generally known in the astronomical community.

The Titius-Bode law cited by the authors is also an empirical formula without as yet, a physical basis. The predicted diameters and masses of the proposed planets are large, and as such the planets should have been observed already. The authors do not have clear reasons why they are unobservable by the modern optical and radio telescopes. In fact, dozens of asteroid-like objects beyond the orbits of Pluto and Neptune have been detected by astronomers since 1990s, that have much smaller sizes which suggest that such planets are not present. The reported claims do not seem to have been seriously considered by the astronomical community nor has a detailed paper

been published in any standard astronomical journals. Hence, no steps are proposed to be taken to provide assistance at this stage.

Expenditure on foreign visit by Directors of CSIR Labs

3162. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the report of the Controller and Auditor General of India for the year ending March 1999 after examining the records of IIP, NPL, NCL, CBRI, NISCOM, NIO, NAL, CMERI, IICT, CDRI, CMRI, IMTEC, NEERI, CFTRI, laboratories of CSIR for the period 1994—99, states that the Directors of the above institutes spent freely on foreign visits, even though many such visits couldn't be said to help R and D efforts; and

(b) if so, the details of foreign tours of Directors and Scientists of the above laboratories for the above period, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in the Report No. 5 of 2000 has observed that Directors of 3 of the CSIR national labs/Instts. incurred expenditure on foreign visits from Laboratory Reserve Fund (LRF). The table below shows the details of expenditure incurred on foreign tours of Directors and Scientists of these three Labs/Instts. year-wise:—

(Rupees in lakh)

Name of Laboratory	Period	Number of Scientists	Number of Foreign visits	Total expenditure from LRF
IIP	1997-99	24	32 2	48.98
CBRI	1998-99	23	3	1.22
NIO	1998-99			3.71
TOTAL		29	37	53.91